SAIL, the largest producer of steel in the country, has created a Segment Development Cell to promote use of steel in agricultural segment. The cell would concentrate on product development as also application engineering and marketing aspects for this sector.

Slow down in the steel sector

600. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the SAIL Chairman has recently blamed optimistic projections by Government and financial institutions for the slow down in the steel sector;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether the losses of SAIL have increased during the past few months also;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the corrective measures taken to make SAIL a profitable one?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) (a) and (b) SAIL is operating in a competitive environment wherein the performance of a competing unit, inter-alia depends upon the demand and supply scenario. Lower growth rate in consumption of steel vis-a-vis production during 1996-97 and sluggish market conditions affected the entire steel industry.

(c) to (e) SAIL consolidates its financial results on half yearly and annual basis. Hence, profit position will be known after expiry of six months/year of the current financial year.

SAIL has been making profits consistently for the last more than 10 years.

SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis to improve its performance, which include modernisation and technological upgradation of its plants, improving techno-economic factors i.e. reduction in coke rate, energy consumption, metallic input, improvement in yield, extensive customer contact, market oriented product-mix, improvement in quality, long term relationship with customers, leadership in service and customer satisfaction, strict control and monitoring of operating costs, higher productivity and greater autonomy to field officers, etc.

Steel production in public and private sector

601. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the steel production both in the public as well as private sector has suffered a set-back in 1996-97 as compared to 1995-96;

(b) if so, the production and profits of the public sector and private sector steel giants during each of these years; and

(c) the steps being taken to remove the hurdles being faced by the steel sector?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) (a) No, Sir. The production of finished carbon steel reached an all time high of 22.72 million tonnes during 1996-97, recording an increase of 6.17% over the previous year.

(b) and (c) Do not arise

भिलाई इस्पात संयंत्र में नियुक्तियां

602 **श्री दिलीप सिंह जूदेव:** क्या इस्पात मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) भिलाई इस्पात द्वारा वर्ष 1995 एवं 1996 में कितने लोगों की नवीन नियुक्तियां किन-किन पदों पर की गयी हैं;

(ख) इन पदों पर स्थानीय, क्षेत्रीय एवं अनुसूचित जनजाति एवं अनुसूचित जाति के लोगों को प्राथमिकता दिये जाने एवं उनके लिये आरक्षित रखे गये पदों का विवरण एवं उन पर नियुक्त किये गये व्यक्तियों एवं पदों के नाम एवं नियुक्ति तिथि क्या है;

(ग) इन पदों पर नियुक्ति दी जाने से पूर्व क्या सभी प्रकार की योग्यताओं और अनिवार्यताओं की जांच प्राथमिकता एवं आरक्षित पदों के अनुसार कर ली गयी थी; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो इस तरह जांच कर सभी बातें सही होने की प्रमाणित करने वाले अधिकारियों के नाम एवं पद नामों का ब्यौरा क्या है?

इस्पात मंत्री तथा खान मंत्री (श्री बीरेन्द्र प्रसाद बैश्य): (क) से (घ) सूचना एकत्र की जा रही है और संभा पटल पर रख दी जाएगी।

Revival of IISCO

603. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn up a revival package for IISCO;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) (a) to (c) SAIL have submitted a proposal to revive IISCO in a Joint Venture partnership with M/s. Tyazhpromexport (TPE) of Russia. This proposal is dependent on the use of Rupee Debt funds for which an inter-Governmental agreement between Government of India and the Russian Government is required.

Failure of Domestic steel Industry to meet targets

604. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the domestic steel industry has failed to meet the production and consumption targets set for 1996-97;

(b) whether both public and private sector are responsible for this;